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17 September 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Congressional Briefing

1. Attached is a precis of what, for your audience, are the most significant points of the McNamara Paper. It can be used as the core of your presentation. It can be fleshed out with the additional details given in the principal findings and these can be further fleshed out with the details given in the summary discussion. The essence of [] paper is compressed into my points 4 and 5, but these are thickets to avoid taking up in detail, if possible. If they cannot be avoided, they are thickets [] is ideally qualified to guide you through.

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2. As background for any discussion which may come up, you should recognize that there is a radical difference in logical order between the way the U. S. views the war and the way Hanoi views the war. We see it as northern aggression (initially by proxy), which it is. The DRV -- or, rather, the Lao Dong -- does not see itself as the rightful ruler of only North Vietnam; it sees itself as entitled to rule all Vietnam. Its support of southern struggles is, consequently, not considered by the Lao Dong as foreign support nor is it willing to acknowledge that PAVN troops fighting in the south (which Hanoi pretends aren't there anyway) are foreign troops. You have a civil war in Vietnam fought south of the 17th Parallel but in which both Vietnamese governments, particularly Hanoi, claim the right to rule the whole country. This complicates matters considerably and has a major effect on Hanoi's negotiating posture.

3. In this context you may find it useful to have at hand the fact that of the eleven members of the Lao Dong Politburo, four are known to be ethnic southerners (i. e., born south of the 17th Parallel). These four include the head of the state structure, DRV Premier Pham Van Dong; the First Secretary of the Lao Dong Party, Le Duan; and ^{the man} who is probably the overall Viet Cong commander, Nguyen Chi Thanh. Thanh and Giap are the only two senior (i. e., four-star) generals in the North Vietnamese army.

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(The fourth southerner is Pham Hung, Deputy Premier of the Government's Council of Ministers and Chairman of the Finance and Commerce Board in the Prime Minister's office.)

4. I hesitate to add to your homework, but do recommend that, before Monday, you refresh yourself on the Hanoi and NLF positions as expressed in the former's four and the latter's five points. An old but still valid background piece on this topic is also attached to this memorandum.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Acting Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachments

Orig - DCI w/atts
1 - GAC Chrono w/1 att ✓
1 - McNamara Project w/1 att
1 - Special Projects-DCI w/1 att
1 - VAS Chrono

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